Rushden Urban Council.

MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORT 1896.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit to you my Annual Report for the year ending Dec. 31st, 1896.

The number of deaths during the year have been 85. Thirty-three of under one year; Three of one year and under five; Seven of five years and under fifteen; Five of fifteen and under twenty-five; Twenty-seven of twenty-five years and under sixty-five; Ten of sixty-five and upwards.

The causes of death are as follows:—One from Typhoid Fever; One from Diarrhœa; One from Rheumatic Fever; Sixteen from Phthisis; Sixteen from Pneumonia and Bronchitis; Four from Heart Disease; Three from Influenza; One from Mumps; One from Injuries; Forty-one from all other Diseases.

The average estimated population being about 10,200, brings the death rate to 8.3 per 1000.

The total number of births registered were 398. 194 Boys, 204 Girls. The birth rate being 39.0 per 1000.

In looking through the cause of mortality, there is only one death from Zymotic Disease. The death rate from Phthisis is rather high, being 1.6 per 1000. The predisposing causes being, as I have called attention to in my previous reports—want of proper ventilation, dampness of soil, and chills. I am of opinion that the death rate from Phthisis would decrease, had the people good and sufficient food, were warmly clothed, and breathed pure air.

It will be noticed that the general death rate is a remarkably low one, being 8.3 per 1000. This is attributed to our Sanitary Improvements, and the absence of any serious epidemic, also the good nursing the majority of the cases have had from our district Nurse. The death rate of children under five of this year and 1894 compared shows as follows; 1894—Fifty-one under one year, Thirty-four one year and under five. 1896—Thirty-three under one year, Three one year and under five. In a measure this shows how valuable good nursing proves in children's diseases, and how essential it is that the Rushden Nursing Association should be well supported. This also applies to nursing institutes generally.

In reviewing the last year's work I find that one death was reported in May from Typhoid Fever. In this case the man had only been living at Rushden three weeks, and he was ill and wasting at Irchester, so that probably he had the fever there. In April there were five cases of Scarlet Fever, and two in June. Isolation and disinfection were resorted to, and at the end of the year about fifty cases of measles came under my notice. Handbills stating the preventive measures necessary to be taken against the spread of the disease were circulated from house to house, and extra sanitary precautions carried out. The Schools were also disinfected and thoroughly cleaned during the Christmas holidays, since which time the number of cases has decreased.

During the year I have made a systematic inspection of the town and factories, and also all the outdoor workshops. I have also, with the Government Inspector, made a special inspection of Messrs. Cave and Sons' factory. This was found to be in a satisfactory state as to accommodation, but it was necessary more closets should be provided, and that they be more frequently flushed, and connected with the main sewer as soon as it was completed. This has since been done.

Three cases of overcrowding in outdoor workshops were rectified, and two cases of overcrowding in houses in Duck-street were abated.

I have examined six samples of well water, three of which were found bad, and notices to that effect were placed upon the pumps.

The water so far has been good and sufficient, but owing to the rapid growth of the town, and the adoption of the water carriage system of sewage disposal, it will be found necessary to increase the supply. For this purpose we are in negotiation for the purchase of land on which there has already been found a fresh source.

Plans have been passed during the year for 284 new houses and nine new factories. The whole of these are not yet up, but of them there are about 200 new houses occupied.

The contract for the sewage scheme will probably be completed in about a month's time; there will only then remain the private drains to be connected with the main sewer. So far the following streets are practically on the water carriage system of sewage disposal—Mill Field Estate; Moor Road and streets between it and Wellingborough Road; Station Road; Midland Road; Fitzwilliam Street and Washbrook Road; also the National Schools.

Your inspector, Mr. Martin, reports the sanitary improvements made during the year: General nuisances abated, 79; samples of water taken, six; cases of being without water reported, 15—since laid on; drains repaired, 46; drains trapped, 5; pumps repaired, 12; new closets supplied, 16; overcrowding cases, 4; typhoid fever, 1; fumigated 10 houses. During the epidemic of Measles in December, all the schools have been thoroughly disinfected.

The workshops have been visited from time to time during the year.

I beg to remain, Gentlemen, yours faithfully,

C. R. OWEN,

Rushden, January 18th, 1897. Medical Officer of Health.